

More than Just Conservative (1)

By Andrew McColl, 18/12/2012

The Israelites had experienced firsthand the institutional effects of a social order governed by a law-order different from the Bible's. They had been enslaved. The God who had released them from bondage announced at Sinai His standards of righteousness - not just private righteousness but social and institutional righteousness. Thus, the God of liberation is simultaneously the law-giver. The close association of Biblical law and human freedom is grounded in the very character of God.¹

Political conservatives tend to trace their ideological history back to people like the Englishman Edmund Burke (1729-1797), who pointed out in his era, the dangers of the French Revolution. There is nothing wrong with that, but they could go a whole lot further. They could include Oliver Cromwell (who successfully defeated Charles I of England), Stephen Langton (who wrote the Magna Carta, in opposition to King John), and many others.

But the real basis of political conservatism should be traced to Israel's Exodus from Egypt. Why? Because it is here that we gain the proper understanding of the need to conserve and protect individuals and legitimate social institutions (such as the family and the Church) against the ravages of a tyrannical, humanistic state.

And it is here that the true political conservative gets his authority. The history of government has always been about the struggle between liberty and bondage, and the Bible has commonly been at the forefront of this debate. This explains why the tyrants of history have tended to be haters of the God of the Bible.

People cannot truly know themselves or each other without the Bible, neither can they correctly understand anything of the human condition without the Bible. It wasn't written by us, (though God inspired a number of human writers to put pen to paper). It was written by our Creator, Who describes us as reprobate sinners, needing a Saviour, His Son. When we come to the knowledge of this fact, we begin to understand our utter incapacity to deal with ourselves and society, outside of the God of the Bible.

When political conservatives ignore the God of the Bible and the Exodus, they lose all capacity to speak authoritatively to society. They are just another politician. This is the tragedy of the modern era; few political leaders willing to accept the Bible as their text-book for liberty, and apply it to society. The Church hasn't consistently applied it; why should we expect politicians to?

But this can and must change. How? By the impetus and pressure from faithful Christians within the Church, who understand the claims of Christ on every society, and that every society that ignores Christ's commands only prepares itself for His judgment.

¹ Gary North, "The Sinai Strategy," 1986, p.19.

This means the education and instruction of Christians in the scriptures must move to a whole new level. We must consider a lot more the implications of applying the whole of scripture to the era we live in. To education, to health, to welfare, to law, to defence and foreign affairs, and economics. The Bible speaks clearly to these matters.² That means we have got to get busy to find out what it means to obey Jesus Christ in realms we haven't considered much in the past.

This is all a part of us preparing to give a good account to God. It's all part of serving the generation we are a part of, and providing society with the leaven of the kingdom of God.

I'm a political conservative, but I believe Christians must be much more than that, just reacting to the grim excesses of the politics of the Left. What the world really needs is an articulation of the political and social implications of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He can bring liberty to every individual and nation of the world, but always and only on His terms.

It was God Who brought about the Exodus? When He called Moses, He said

I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their suffering (Ex.3:7).

The Bible makes it clear that every person is a slave of someone. Whose slave are you? Nations are the same. And like individuals, those nations that run from God run invariably into bondage. That's what communism brought to the Soviet Union, but the West today really isn't too far behind; it's just taken us a lot longer to dig ourselves into a similarly deep hole.

But let's not dwell in this hole of our own making, a moment longer than we have to. Let's get back into the light of God through Biblical obedience. That's what He's always wanted us to do.

I will walk at liberty, for I seek your precepts. I will also speak of Your testimonies before kings and shall not be ashamed (Ps.119:45-46).

² See Andrew McColl, "The Great Christian Revolution."

More than Just Conservative (2)

By Andrew McColl, 25/12/2012

The Judeo-Christian and constitutionally mandated relationship between government power and individual liberty is not balance. It is bias – a bias in favour of liberty. All presumptions should favour the natural rights of individuals, not the delegated and seized powers of the government. Individual liberty, not government power, is the default position because persons are immortal and created in God's image, and governments are temporary and based on force.³

For as long as I can remember, Christians in Australia have tended to vote for conservative political parties. There is nothing wrong with that, because the conservative parties have generally been somewhat closer to the scriptures in their policies, than the Labor Party.

But we have to be much more than merely conservative. Why?

Biblical law provides us with God's law, and Jesus Christ in the New Testament never annulled or abolished it. In fact, He said

Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished (Mat.5:17-18).

God's law is not a law based on pragmatism or expediency, but is the law of our Creator, given to Moses in 1,500 BC. We must work towards the implementation of the law of God, beginning in the church, but also in the social and political sphere. This might take a while-maybe generations.⁴

How would that work out? It's easy.

Think of education. What if State education was steadily abandoned in Australia, and parents once again took the responsibility for educating their children? That would be in accordance with the Bible (see Deut.6). That would mean the sale of public schools to the highest bidder, the elimination of public funding for all forms of education, the elimination of seven government departments nationwide, the removal of hundreds of thousands of publicly funded teachers and public servants from the public payroll, with a saving to the taxpayer of many billions annually.

Public education today costs the taxpayer \$14,500 per child, per year. Not any more.

Universities? Funded only by students. You want tertiary education? You pay for it.

³ Andrew Napolitano, "Where is the Outrage?" Lew Rockwell's website, 7/6/2012.

⁴ See Gary North's commentary on Exodus: "Authority and Dominion" (6 volumes), 2012.

Think of health. This is a personal and family responsibility, according to the Bible. What if every public hospital in Australia was sold to the private sector, so there was competition for patients?

Need some other kind of medical help? No problem. Go to the professional you wish to see and pay for their assistance, as we always used to do. All of a sudden, the competition/profit factor would be re-introduced to health, the level of service would rise as providers of various kinds competed for patients in a free market, and the cost to the taxpayer plummeted.

You require a hospital visit? You'd need to pay. No Medicare, no government involvement whatsoever. No more public funding for abortion. Abortion would become a capital crime punishable by death, because it's murder. We would have about 90,000 extra new Australians, and if their parents didn't want them, changed adoption laws would make adoption actually simple and easy. (There are thousands of Australian couples who cannot have children, but who would love to adopt).

What about welfare? Once again, a personal, family and Church responsibility, according to the scripture. So, we would need to work towards the progressive elimination of all of Social Security: Family Payments, Baby Bonuses, the dole, and other methods of government social manipulation. Costs would fall, savings would rise, and the result of the savings in these three areas would be massive tax cuts, nationwide. The nation would hardly know itself.

There's more, a lot more. What about the progressive elimination of the standing army? We would no longer have thousands of fit, able men who are paid by the tax-payer to go on exercises, or sit around polishing their boots and machine-guns, along with all the other expenses, like low-cost housing, and all the other add-ons that cost tax-payers millions. Furthermore, standing armies have a long history of being used by governments as instruments of oppression against "dissidents."

Forget that. Replace that system with a militia based on volunteers, who work like everyone else in the community, but are armed to the teeth with their own weaponry. (That's what the Swiss have, and people don't tangle with them, for obvious reasons).

In terms of immigration the Bible says that

you shall not oppress a stranger, since you yourselves know the feelings of a stranger, for you also were strangers in the land of Egypt (Ex.23:9).

Why not let anyone come here that wants to with no waiting time, subject to infectious disease checks and their willingness to make a Trinitarian confession? Oh, and they can bring Granny, too.

Eliminate the Reserve Bank to prevent the manipulation of interest rates, and ensure that for every dollar banks lend, they have a dollar in the bank. Remove ties between government and banks: no more "too big to fail." They're on their own.

What about we also get rid of the ABC? That would save the taxpayer \$800 million a year. The sale of the land and buildings would probably bring a similar amount- maybe more.

Why would we do that? Well, no nation ever needs a taxpayer funded broadcaster, which is a recipe for inefficiency, not to speak of political manipulation. Broadcasters should compete in the free market. That way they stay efficient and very close to the market, or goes broke: simple as that.

What about we progressively close other government departments, and sack the bureaucrats? Don't need 'em anymore.

Oh, and there's more. Privatise the railways, selling the land. No more public transport. All of this pushes assets right back into the private sphere, taking the burden off taxpayers.

Tax rates are really plummeting now, rushing back towards 10%, flat. Now, we're really talking!

Before any of this could happen, I freely acknowledge that there will have to be a social revolution. Not one with guns and violence, but an ideological, intellectual and spiritual revolution, that would have to have its powerful beginnings in the Church. The Church will have to get re-acquainted with the law of God, and be ready to obey it. That's what we're here for: bringing the leaven of the kingdom of God into the community.

Lord, I have heard the report about You and I fear. O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy (Hab.3:2).

Conclusion:

I want to be more than a conservative, because the Bible is much more than conservative. It's a book for free people.

Do you want to be free? You'll need to read the Bible, and obey it. There has never been a document in human history that has brought about such freedom, when people have obeyed it. But freedom always pre-supposes responsibility and obedience to God.

Is this a foolish fantasy? Only if you don't believe what God said to Joshua:

This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success (Joshua 1:8).

More than Just Conservative (3)

By Andrew McColl, 1/1/2013

Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When God restores His captive people, let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad (Ps.53:6).

Mount Zion is a hill in Jerusalem, just outside the walls of the city. While it was significant in the Old Testament and especially in King David's time as the high point of Jerusalem, the term "Mount Zion" has a different meaning to Christians today. The writer to the Hebrews tells us that "...you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels..." (Heb.12:22).

Why is this?

Jesus made a very disturbing declaration to the Jews, before they crucified Him. He said that "...the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it" (Mat.21:43). Thus we can safely say that the church has received the kingdom of God.

This means that for the church, the geography of Mount Zion is insignificant, but the symbolism of Mount Zion is still very relevant. Today, the Church has become the centre-point of God's purpose, and the promises in the Old Testament relating to Mount Zion and Israel, now apply to the Church. Paul writes in Ephesians that "...the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places" (Eph.3:10), and that the church is "...the pillar and support of the truth" (I Tim.3:15).

What has this got to do with conservatism? A lot.

Unless the church is accurately promoting Biblical truth, there is really little hope for the world. If the people of Mount Zion (the church) are rebellious, wayward, deceived or asleep, the truth will not be effectively communicated in the world.

This should deepen our resolve to get off our backside and get busy communicating the truth of God, firstly within and to the church. That way, the church can learn how to be more obedient to God, and how to teach sinners the ways of God.

The Old Testament promises to Israel were extremely important, and have been appropriated by the church. But what have we done with them? Have we taken them seriously? I don't think so.

Through Isaiah in 700 BC, God said that "...many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us His ways, and that we may walk in His paths.' For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa.2:3).

Later through the prophet Zechariah, God said "...many peoples and mighty nations will come and seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favour of the Lord" (Zech.8:22).

There is nothing outside the realm of God's kingdom. Thus there is nothing about which that we can safely say, "Oh, we don't need to be bothered about that." The Bible never teaches a sacred/secular dichotomy. That is why I have been trying to communicate that economics, welfare, education, law, government, the conduct of foreign affairs and every other human activity are aspects that God wants to redeem and change, for His glory.

This requires our obedience, first. We in the church cannot expect the people and nations of the world to give up foolish ideas and practices, if we haven't rejected them, beforehand. Otherwise, we're promoting hypocrisy.

Now is the time for a legitimate indoctrination to occur. The people of God (the church), getting immersed in the scriptures and learning how to live them out in real life. That way, we will have the ability to say to the international community, "This is how you do it."

More than Just Conservative (4)

By Andrew McColl, 8/1/2013

If it is true, as Berman believed,⁵ that we are approaching the end of an era, then it is incumbent on Christians to begin to rethink their covenantal heritage. They must begin to offer an alternative to the present collapsing social order, and this alternative must be self-consciously judicial. Christians must become judicial revolutionaries, not simply defenders of the present legal order. If we remain on the deck of this sinking ship claiming that it is in principle conforming with biblical principles, we shall go down with it. Sticking with the status quo means sure death by drowning.⁶

No one likes change. We all like things to go on just as they have, because that means we don't have to contemplate interruptions to our normal procedure. But history shows that when people hang on doggedly to an untenable theological, ideological, or philosophical position, doctrine or practice, they ultimately get swept away in an onslaught, which only reveals the stupidity of their position. Karl Marx doesn't impress many, since 1991.

And if we believe in the Church that the Bible is the text-book for our faith and practice, then how have we applied this to the nations of the world? Is the Bible God's text for the nations, or does He only want it applied to individuals, families and the Church? (Remember this: the terms "nations" is used over 450 times in the scriptures.) And if we believe that God judges everyone and everything that is hostile to Him, we had best open our eyes to the scriptures, along with the affairs of the world, to see how these two are intersecting. We may find some conflict.

If there is a wholesale contempt for God and His Word displayed amongst the nations of the world, there will be judgment on those nations as a consequence. The Bible shows us in many places, God turning up the heat on nations that have held Him and His Word in contempt.

Think of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Bible says that "...the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven, and He overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground" (Gen.19:24-25). God held them accountable for their contempt of Him.

No doubt there may be some who will claim, "That was the Old Testament." Yes, it was. But Jesus also said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant will be uprooted" (Mat.15:13), and He wasn't speaking of potatoes. Ultimately, nothing will be able to stand against the kingdom of God, and God can be relied on to back up His Word, as He repeatedly did in the Bible.

Christians are glad to be conservative politically, when it means conserving those things that have Biblical legitimacy. But the Christian wants to do more than merely conserve. He wants to GROW things, especially those things that correspond to his Christian faith. Think of this:

⁵ Harold Berman, "Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition," 1983, p.v.

⁶ Gary North, "Authority and Dominion," 2012, Vol.6, p.1637.

All over the world, classrooms are being scrapped as retarding influences. Many employers of the 21st Century know that college degrees represent little of value; often a negative value. One of the most liberating developments of the early 21st Century is the broad realization that schooling retards both learning and education. Through the internet, real accelerated learning is becoming decentralized and de-institutionalized. So are people. Children and adults are learning how to learn, how to think, and how to make long-term plans for a long-term future. What they want to do now is build, and perhaps re-build some of the things destroyed by counterculture.⁷

I'm not interested in trying to preserve public education; I look forward to the day when it collapses. Why? It's not in the Bible, it's hostile to God and family life, is detrimental to children and their education, and is an utter waste of billions. But I am overjoyed at the prospect of millions of children being successfully home-educated by their parents. Then, we'll really see some great strides forward for children, families, churches and for the nations of the world.

But if that is the way ahead with education, what about other things? What about how we deal with criminals? Why shouldn't we think about crime Biblically?

That would mean three things: restoring restitution (the notion that criminals should pay back at least double what they have stolen), capital punishment for capital offenses such as murder, and getting rid of gaols, which have no place under Biblical law. Aspects of Biblical law as it applies to criminal activity are found throughout the first five books of the Bible, but especially Exodus 20-23 and Deuteronomy 6-27.

Gaols are very expensive places for taxpayers to maintain. They are also places of oppression, violence and sexual abuse, and they do nothing for the victims of crime, who have suffered loss. Victims of crime suffer loss from criminal activity, having to pay for legal assistance, then suffer loss through having to pay for the maintenance of criminals in gaol. But if criminals had to pay restitution to their victims (at least double) it would probably teach them very quickly that crime doesn't pay.

This is one of the reasons Biblical law is so liberating for godly people. The Bible actually calls it "...the law of liberty" (James 2:12).

The notion that we could once again embrace Biblical law may seem revolutionary to some. But society is in such decline, and there is such disenchantment with the judicial outcomes we are presently seeing in the community, that it may not be long before we see societies ready for the reinstatement of Biblical law. This happened in King Josiah's time (II Kings 22-23), and it could very well happen today.

We might hardly know ourselves.

⁷ Geoffrey Bodkin, "The Reasons for Optimism," Part 2, 19/12/2012. (See www.westernconservatory.com)

More than Just Conservative (5)

By Andrew McColl, 15/1/2013

Christianity's continual willingness to stand against culturally approved evil in the name of Christ ...makes the church a revolutionary force. Christian revolution begins with the individual and has its concrete effect on the culture. Whether or not it exercises control, it always takes its stand with the external requirements of God against the idolatrous attractions of the moment. ... All orders, old and new, are subject to the same eternal law that the church serves, and therefore are judged by the same standard.⁸

Over thirty years ago, it was Francis Schaeffer in his book and video series, "How Should we Then Live?" who got me thinking a lot more about the relevance of culture, and the responsibility of Christians to redeem it.

We know that the Reformation substantially changed the culture of those countries it impacted, for the better. Think of Bach, Rembrandt and Milton. The leaders and members of the church in that era faced daunting circumstances, perhaps worse than today, and they understood that the gospel had application to all of society, and to all of life.

That meant that the church needed to engage in a steady building process, laying foundations for those who would come after them. This has always been the task of the church. In relation to culture, think of this:

Creation is what God makes by Himself, and culture is what He makes through us. William Herridge wrote, "A thoroughly cultured person is one who is thoroughly matured in every part of his life, so that he is able to fulfill the purpose of his creation."

Of course, we're speaking of much more than becoming artists, musicians or writers. God has made us as individuals with specific abilities and contributions to make to our families, churches, communities and nations, which all will benefit from. Our task over time is to change the whole of culture everywhere, so that it is subject to the scriptures.

When the British went to India, the nation was steeped in idolatry and paganism. The Hindu custom was that when a man died, his wife would be burnt with him on his funeral pyre. The British were not all Christians, but they had enough Christian influence in their hearts and minds to put a stop to this barbaric practice.

In the twentieth century, there was another form of idolatry present in the world: Nazism. Despite the fact that the Church was by no means as effective then as it was 300 years earlier, its resistance did have an impact. Analysis by Helen Fein has revealed that

⁸ Herbert Schlossberg, "Idols for Destruction: Christian Faith and its Confrontation with American Culture," 1983, p.325.

Church resistance was the most important single factor in blocking official State collaboration with Nazi Holocaust policies...the majority of Jews evaded deportation in every State occupied by or allied with Germany in which the head of the dominant church spoke out publicly against deportation before or as soon as it began.⁹

Today, there will have to be a new beginning in the West: Christians going back to the Bible, and considering all that we think, say and do in the light of scripture, and speaking about it. That will have massive ramifications for us as individuals, families and members of the community, and for the nations. It will mean that “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world” are doing their job.

The first step?

Reviving the notion of individual liberty and responsibility to God. We cannot leave it all to the government any more. We must take positive, vigorous steps ourselves in obedience to the gospel. When Zaccheus the tax-collector was converted, he understood there had to be changes: “Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much” (Luke 19:8).

In 1961, Rousas Rushdoony wrote in “Intellectual Schizophrenia,”

The end of an age is always a time of turmoil, war, economic catastrophe, cynicism, lawlessness, and distress. But it is also an era of heightened challenge and creativity, of issues, and their world-wide scope, never has an era faced a more demanding and exciting crisis. This then above all else is the great and glorious era to live in, a time of opportunity, one requiring fresh and vigorous thinking, indeed a glorious time to be alive.¹⁰

God has much for us to accomplish, and He requires that we be more than just conservatives. Are you ready?

⁹ William Pfaff, “When Civil Society joins the Casualty List,” ‘The Australian Financial Review,’ 19/10/2001, p.12.

¹⁰Quoted in Rousas Rushdoony, “The Roots of Reconstruction,” 1991, p.xi.

More than Just Conservative (6)

By Andrew McColl, 22/1/2013

Everyone likes the idea of good government. I certainly do. But how do we define “good?” People’s expectations of what “good” means differ markedly. For some people, good government means one that can consistently run a budget surplus, that doesn’t harm innocent people, keeps all its promises and reduces taxation.

For others, good government is one that provides all sorts of handouts to those it defines as needy, that favours big companies with tax breaks, but increases the tax rate on people as their salary increases, is seriously interested in reducing the carbon footprint, or preventing the destruction of old growth forests, or stopping the export of live sheep and cattle, on the grounds of “animals welfare,” or preventing law-abiding people in the community having unlimited access to firearms.

In one conversation that Jesus had, He showed a surprising interest in the adjective “good.” Replying to a question from someone who addressed Him as “Good teacher,” Jesus replied, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone (Mk.10:17-18).”

This should teach us something: everything good comes from God. And if that’s true, then good government would find its origins in the Bible, gaining its master-plan from God and His Word, while evil governments ignore or despise God’s Word.

Can it be as simple as that? Absolutely.

Does the Bible really say much about government? It actually says quite a lot, if we will go looking.¹¹ Speaking of Jesus Christ, it says that “...the government will rest on His shoulders...”, and “...there will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace...” (Isa.9:6, 7).

Think of this important comment from North:

It should be the ideal for every system of civil law to remove all positive sanctions by the State and impose only those negative sanctions authorized by biblical law. The State is to impose negative sanctions only: punishing public evil. It is not a wealth-creator; it is a wealth-redistributor. It is not safe to entrust to the State the power of making one man rich at the expense of another. It is also not moral.¹²

Jesus defined “good” as those things that came from God, but the tyrants of the twentieth century (such as such as Stalin, Hitler and Mao), were God haters. They ignored and despised God’s Word, and their political, social and economic policies reflected this attitude. Stalin’s predecessor Lenin made this clear when he defined the meaning of his dictatorship as “unlimited power, resting directly on force, not limited by anything.” They all believed that their definition of government was legitimate

¹¹ See Gary Demar, “God and Government.” See also my 11-part series, “The Christian Vision of Government,” 2012.

¹² Gary North, “Inheritance and Dominion,” 1999, ch.54.

and good, yet they were cumulatively responsible for the death of over a hundred million innocent people. They were humanists, and few people today would call theirs, “good government.”

Because the Bible’s definition of good government is so radically at odds with humanistic definitions, we should avoid like the plague the notion of governments “doing good.” According to the Bible, government should not be about providing positive sanctions to people in the community, but is only responsible to ensure God’s law is maintained. No redistribution of wealth (except in cases of restitution for criminal behaviour, as determined by the courts), no graduated taxation rates, no taxation higher than 9%,¹³ no compulsory education, and in general, no restrictions on people leaving or coming to the country. And in summary, no interference with what people do with themselves, except if they are in breach of God’s law.

It was Chesterton who commented that “when people stop believing in God, they don’t believe in nothing: they believe in anything.” Historically, when people reject the true Messiah Jesus Christ, they seek another one, and they most commonly focus on government. Government “provides,” because it has access to vast sums of wealth through taxation. Evil people think, “there must be a way to access that money.” Yes, there is a way: to get sufficient politicians to see things your way!

Many of us don’t want government to do good by humanistic definitions. We would prefer that they kept out of our lives and our bank-accounts, letting us do what we want.

A philosophy of government derived from the Bible would ensure that governments kept out of the “doing good business,” because a) It never lines up with Biblical philosophy and practice. b) They waste vast amounts of our money. c) They subvert and oppose the work of responsible individuals, families and churches. d) They employ a vast army of bureaucrats to take responsibility for tasks that God made individuals, families and churches responsible for. e) They never finish up doing much good at all.

Then we have to pay through taxation, and who benefits the most? Why, bureaucrats and politicians, of course!

Conclusion:

Since the garden of Eden, disaster has always been the result when people ignore God’s commands and come up with their plan. And here’s the big question: whose definitions will you pay attention to? What sort of government do you want?

¹³ See I Samuel 8.

More than Just Conservative (7)

By Andrew McColl, 29/1/2013

*The darkest pages in history are often the most instructive.*¹⁴

The French Revolution ushered in the idea that social institutions that have stood for hundreds or even thousands of years, could be torn down with gay abandon and replaced by government edict. This revolution was both explicitly and implicitly anti-Christian, being founded on the atheistic beliefs and philosophy of Voltaire, Rousseau and Diderot. The Christian structures of society were subject to ridicule and abuse, while the goddess of Reason was exalted. It was “liberty, equality and fraternity, or death!” Especially death, as Madame Guillotine received a rigorous workout.

*When King Louis XVI was confronted by a mob, he ordered his more than 600 Swiss guards to surround him, hoping that this act would dissuade them from attacking. It didn't work. They were all savagely murdered. The mobs ripped them to shreds and mutilated their corpses. “Women, lost to all sense of shame,” said one surviving witness, “were committing the most indecent mutilations on the dead bodies from which they tore pieces of flesh and carried them off in triumph.” Children played kickball with the guards' heads. Every living thing in the royal palace in Paris was butchered or thrown from the windows by the hooligans. Women were raped before being hacked to death.*¹⁵

The instigators of the Russian and Chinese Revolutions of the twentieth century (along with the Fascists in Italy and Germany), in many ways sought to emulate the French Revolution. Lenin in Russia claimed that the failure of the French Revolution was that they hadn't killed enough people, so his solution was an obvious one. And when Mao violently assumed power in China, he sought to outdo Stalin (who succeeded Lenin) in terms of the ferocity and unpredictability of his attacks on communities and individuals. It is still difficult today to know just how many people Mao killed, but it could have been more than 60 million.

Why should we draw attention to this?

Professing conservatives need to know what is the alternative to true conservatism. It is not that conservatives should be afraid of change; far from it. But what we ought to be afraid of, is attacking and tearing down legitimate social structures such as the family and the church, as if they were in some way evil or outmoded, and need to be destroyed.

At the bi-centenary of the French Revolution in 1989, it is significant that of the political leaders present, only Margaret Thatcher had the courage to be critical of what the Revolution stood for. Today, the West has not really repudiated the French Revolution at all, for there are elements of it which have become embedded in government policy, world-wide. And this has had consequences.

Today,

¹⁴ Gordon Craig, “Germany 1866-1945,” 1980, p.viii.

¹⁵ Ann Coulter, “Godless.”

*The traditional model of a vertically-structured society under the centralized authority of the state has shown itself unable to satisfy even the narrowest definition of societal order. Wars, depressions, genocides, torture, police-state brutalities, assassinations, economic dislocations, imprisonments without trials, and a twentieth century death toll of some 200,000,000 victims of state power, attest to the failure of political systems to provide their promised protection of life, liberty, property, and the creative processes that sustain a civilization.*¹⁶

Australia has witnessed a withdrawal from genuine conservative political theory. In 1996 after the Port Arthur massacre, an ostensibly conservative Prime Minister in the person of John Howard enacted a 1.5 billion dollar gun-buyback scheme, to remove “assault weapons” and automatic shotguns from the community. Yet later, in welcoming President Bush to the Australian Parliament in 2003, Mr Howard indicated that one of the things that bring Australia and the U.S. together, “*is the belief that individuals are more important than the State.*” That sounded very conservative, but his earlier legislation indicated that individuals had better get used to the opposite.

The Italian Fascist Mussolini spoke of this doctrine. In “Fascism: Doctrines and Institutions,” he wrote that “*The fascist conception of life, stresses the importance of the State and accepts the individual only in so far as his interests coincide with the State.*”¹⁷ Mussolini put his finger on a fundamental difference of priority. This difference has great implications today.

The origins of conservatism’s concern for individual liberties are found in the Bible, because the gospel begins with the individual.

*Freedom begins with internal regeneration, and then steadily works its effects outward. If spiritual freedom is not allowed by civil rulers to work its way toward political and economic freedom, then God at last breaks the chains of bondage that restrain the covenantal blessings of freedom. This is the message of the Book of Exodus.*¹⁸

But recently, a purportedly conservative State government in NSW enacted legislation that made it a criminal offence to “consort” with people with a criminal record, and one man has been gaoled as a result. Now, he’s consorting all right-in gaol. In Victoria, a purportedly conservative State government, under the guise of “Child Protection,” has taken two children from their parents for this reason: the children were obese.

As Walter Williams pointed out,

*One does not have to be in favour of death camps or wars of conquest to be a tyrant. The only requirement is that one has to believe in the primacy of the state over individual rights.*¹⁹

A political leader claims he’s a conservative? Good, but show me the fruits of his conservatism. Three supposedly Australian conservative governments haven’t seemed to know the meaning of the term.

¹⁶ Butler Shaffer, “Wet Sidewalks cause Rain,” Lew Rockwell’s website, 1/1/2013.

¹⁷ Quoted in Di Lorenzo, T., “Fascialism: The New American System,” Lew Rockwell website, 11/6/09.

¹⁸ Gary North, “Authority and Dominion,” 2012, p.1563.

¹⁹ Walter Williams, “Liberals, Progressives and Socialists,” Lew Rockwell’s website, 8/8/2012.

More than Just Conservative (8)

By Andrew McColl, 5/2/2013

Freedom for the individual is a necessary social condition so that people can fulfil their callings. But freedom does not exist in abstraction. Nor does it exist between the ears only. It requires an environment where a person has the liberty to act, without restraint, in order to achieve certain goals. This atmosphere, or social condition, is a political system that has minimum government, allowing individuals to pursue their God-given callings in the way they think best.

There is a force at work today that aims to take freedom away. This force is religious in nature and anti-Christian in its motivation. It is, like all non-Christian belief systems, an endeavour to create heaven on earth: Utopia-without God.²⁰

The fallen human heart loves the idea of a political solution to our problems. After all, if there is a political solution to some or all of life's problems, I won't have to change. "Personal responsibility? Don't give me that line!"

We can generally measure the level of personal maturity of the community, by its response to proposed political solutions to national problems. And when the community reacts with acclaim and enthusiasm to a government plan which requires massive expenditure increase, we are reminded that we Christians have a lot of work to do, educating the community.

The embrace of true conservatism means that people have to change the way they think, and especially, what they believe. Ultimately, it is really a spiritual and a theological issue. Because it begins spiritually, we Christians ought to be the first to identify and articulate what genuine Christian conservatism is. Tragically, we have sometimes been as seduced as Eve ever was, by the false promises of the counterfeit political Messiahs, who have numbered legions in history. And they keep coming.

Utopians love to assert their rule over others, and they believe in salvation by legislation. "See a problem? Change the law!"

People like to celebrate the New Year with fireworks, but sometimes those celebrations get out of hand and someone gets injured. The Utopian solution? Ban the public from using fireworks! The only people who can have them? Government employees!

Firearms get misused. The Utopian's answer? Place severe restrictions on ownership. But as the twentieth century showed, gun control frequently led to genocide. Those that have no weapons are defenceless.

When I was a boy on our farm, we sometimes needed to remove trees, by placing explosives under them. The tree was in the way, and using explosives was a cheap and quick way to solve a problem.

²⁰ Ian Hodge, "Freedom and Utopianism," 2011.

Dangerous? Potentially, yes, but as long as we acted responsibly, no problem. We could buy the relevant explosive material over the counter, no questions asked. But now that terrorism has become an international concern, not any more. Buying explosives? Why, we could be terrorists!

Late in 2012 a married woman was abducted while walking home alone late at night in Melbourne, raped and murdered. The Leader of the Federal Opposition, Tony Abbott, had a solution: spend \$50 million on surveillance cameras!

Tony: I don't think so. This is not East Germany in 1965. This is the very thing that Orwell implicitly warned us of in *1984*: government by the elite, through the Surveillance State. He may be a Rhodes scholar (like the humanists Bob Hawke and Kim Beasley), but Tony needs some frank instruction in Biblical ethics.

He thinks he's a conservative? What about a general warning of the dangers of the night for unaccompanied women? What about a reminder of the responsibility of fathers and husbands to look after their daughters and wives? What about capital punishment for murder? And what if women carried a handgun in their purse, in case of attack?

How far we have fallen from a Biblical understanding of individual liberty.

We Christians must be the first to acknowledge these facts: there is no perfect world, or perfect society; no Utopia. Why is that? Well, sin has been with us since Adam and Eve. The Bible tells us that "all we like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way..." (Isa.53:6), and "the heart is more deceitful than all else, and desperately sick; who can understand it?" (Jer.17:9). Thus the dreamers who promise to remedy social problems with some grand government plan are dangerous people to any community.

Of course, they are not the real problem. The problem is within us. That foolish, ignorant people who ignore history and what the Bible says about human nature believe in them, vote for them, and then ultimately get disillusioned when the facts of failure become readily apparent, if they survive the experience.

So, conservatism begins with a measure of negativism about the human heart, and about the inability of politics and politicians being able to effect real change. That might seem hard, but is very, very necessary, if we really want to avoid yet another experience of pain and disillusionment at the hand of government. All over the world, we should have had enough by now. But we probably haven't.

Real and lasting change in any community begins with individuals, families and churches, believing what the true Messiah said, acting upon His Words, and taking responsibility for their actions. There is no other way of true liberty.

I will walk at liberty, for I seek Your precepts (Ps.119:45).

More than Just Conservative (9)

By Andrew McColl, 12/2/2013

For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; He will save us (Isa.33:22).

It is the nature of humanism (the world's second oldest religion), to replace the commands and laws of God with our own. But this behaviour always comes with a price: God's judgment. He spoke through Hosea, "...since you have forgotten the law of your God, I will also forget your children" (Hos.4:6).

This is what we have observed from the garden of Eden, till today. Hitler, early in his rule of Germany, spoke of his as the "thousand year Reich." Thankfully, it was only twelve years before the Third Reich perished in the war-torn ruins of Berlin.

The salvation of God is to be reflected in the totality of our lives, our families, our communities and our nations, and the above text illustrates this fact: the judiciary, the legislature and the executive are to obey Jesus Christ. When a nation submits to God completely, the promise of God is that "He will save us." This was evident in Israel's history, and will indeed be evident in the future.

But Israel didn't want that when Jesus was around. In the Parable of the Nobleman (Luke 19:11-27), Jesus predicted what Israel's attitude would be towards Him: they would say, "...we do not want this man to reign over us" (v.14). And when He was on trial, they declared to their pagan governor Pilate, "...we have no king but Caesar" (Jn.18:15).

There was nothing new about this. Ever since they had left Egypt, Israel had spent most of the time in rebellion against the Lord. The brief interludes of revival under godly kings were atypical of Israel. Thus Isaiah had to acknowledge around 700 BC, that "an ox knows its owner, and a donkey its manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand ...where will you be stricken again, as you continue in your rebellion? The whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint" (Isa.1:3, 5).

Later, Israel reached the peak of its rebellion, when they got rid of the Son of God. But 40 years later judgment arrived in AD70 at the hands of the Romans, just as Jesus had predicted in Matthew 23. He said then that

...upon you may fall all the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the porch and the altar. Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation (Mat.23:35-36).

All around the world, nations are in decline because the Church has been in decline. We have been failing to provide the leaven of the kingdom of God, because we have ignored the law of the Lord. The Bible tells us that "the law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple...the judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether...moreover by them Your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward" (Ps.19:7,9,11).

No doubt there will be some reading this who will be thinking, “but we’re under grace, not under law.” But what must be understood is that law and grace always go together. Since the Garden, God has only ever dealt with sinful people on the basis of His grace, but His law gives us the only legitimate framework of legitimate social and ethical behaviour.

The indifference and contempt for God’s law in the church has to go. As the Church has progressively ignored God’s law for 350 years, humanistic legislators have been stepping in to steadily replace it with their own forms of “justice.” And so we abort about 90,000 babies annually in Australia (with State and Federal government sanction), and society thinks nothing of it.

Well, God thinks about it, and calls it murder: the shedding of innocent blood (Prov.6:16, 17). I expect Him to hold us to account for our negligence in this, and many other areas.

But all this can change-quickly. When Jerusalem was being rebuilt in the days of Nehemiah, Ezra was sent there by Artaxerxes king of Persia. Ezra was “...a scribe skilled in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all he requested because the hand of the Lord his God was upon him” (Ezra 7:6).

This was a significant opportunity. Artaxerxes commanded Ezra that “...according to the wisdom of your God which is in your hand, appoint magistrates and judges that they may judge all the people who are in the province beyond the River, even all those who know the laws of your God; and you may teach anyone who is ignorant of them” (Ezra 7:25).

Artaxerxes knew something most of the church today doesn’t: the observance of God’s law is of vital importance to the stability of any nation. God had said through Isaiah, “if only you had paid attention to my commandments! Then your well-being would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea” (Isa.48:18).

We must be more than merely conservatives. We must say with David, “Oh how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day” (Ps.119:97). When we love and embrace God’s law, and successfully press for its adoption throughout the nations of the world, we can really expect to see powerful changes take place, along with the fulfilment of this promise:

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance (Ps.33:12).

More than Just Conservative (10)

By Andrew McColl, 19/2/2013

Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well-pleased; I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not quarrel, nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. A battered reed He will not break off, and a smouldering wick He will not out, until He leads justice to victory. And in His Name the Gentiles will hope (Mat.12:18-21).

... Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly? (Gen.18:25)

There is only one place that humanity will ever find perfect justice in this life: God's law. We can learn one thing from the atheists who turned the twentieth century into a bloodbath: the rejection of God in the legislative, executive or judiciary is always preparatory to the rejection of justice. The Bible warns us of this, when it predicts that "...all those who hate me [God] love death" (Prov.8:36).

Christians have always had a task ahead of them: to preach the good news of Jesus Christ. And this good news has political and judicial applications way beyond what we have been content with, for centuries. If "He will proclaim justice to the Gentiles," and "lead justice to victory..." could this be on any other basis than His own law?

Another of Isaiah's Messianic promises declares of Jesus that "with righteousness He will judge the poor, and decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; and He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked" (Isa.11.4).

Now some could claim, "Well, that's not our job. The Lord will accomplish all that at the Second Coming." But the context of Isaiah 11 makes it clear that it's not the Second Coming, but a logical result of proper gospel preaching. Verse 10 tells us that "then in that day the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; and His resting place will be glorious."

Christians are called by God to be representatives; His servants. In fact, the Bible calls us "ambassadors for Christ" (II Cor.5:20). These are things we are not to leave to God's sovereign power to bring about, but are to tirelessly apply ourselves to in our local communities. Yes, the gospel means the changed lives of individuals according to God's Word, but it also necessitates and demands that the laws of communities and nations change too, according to that same Word. That is also something that honours God, and He requires it.

We do not have the right to say, "thus far and no further." Nor can we draw a line between what is supposedly sacred and secular; this is all God's world we are part of.

When Ahab "did evil in the sight of the Lord more than all who were before him" (I Kings 16:30), Elijah challenged him and related his behaviour to the coming judgment of drought on the land (I Kings 17:1).

After three and a half years, when the drought had lifted at Elijah's word (I Kings 18:41), Ahab sinned again in the matter of Naboth and his vineyard (I Kings 21). Ahab (through Jezebel) had killed Naboth and stolen his vineyard, violations of the Sixth and Eighth Commandments. Again Elijah confronted Ahab (v.20-24). He did not say that he was only interested in Ahab's heart and spiritual life, or in him experiencing peace with God; he predicted God's judgment: destruction for Ahab's wife Jezebel and his whole household, which of course later eventuated (II Kings 9-10).

When Herod committed adultery with Herodias, John confronted him, saying "it is not lawful for you to have her" (Mat.14:4). He was being a faithful prophet to the rulers of the land.

This is what has occurred throughout history since then. John Knox was fearless in his confrontations with Mary in Scotland, an adulteress who had murdered her husband. She was also a believer in the divine right of monarchs, a doctrine completely at odds with the Bible. John would not back down, and he triumphed. He was simply doing what Jesus had commanded: "...teaching them to obey all that I commanded you..." (Mat.28:20).

It is high time that the church's confusion over the law of God was resolved, for it has cost us dearly. The will of God is that His law is obeyed throughout the world, and the institution charged with instructing the world about this is the Church, "...the pillar and support of the truth" (I Tim.3:14). We must be prepared to do this a lot more, and to stand for the truth of God, as it applies to law, economics, politics and government; in fact, every aspect of human behaviour.

Does God pervert justice? Or does the Almighty pervert what is right? (Job 8:3)

It's time to get busy.

More than Just Conservative (11)

By Andrew McColl, 26/2/2013

He will not be disheartened or crushed until He has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law (Isa.42:4).

When Moses was preparing the children of Israel to enter the promised land, he made it abundantly clear that the occupation of the land would be conditional on their obedience to God. The fundamental aspect of this would be their obedience to God's law:

See, I have taught you statutes and judgments just as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do this in the land where you are entering to possess it (Deut.4:5).

From this we must learn this vital fact: God's law and dominion are inseparable. Christians cannot expect to be powerful and influential in the communities of the world, successfully implementing the Great Commission, if we leave aside our tools of dominion.²¹

When Moses had died, God reiterated this fact. He spoke to Joshua: "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall mediate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your ways prosperous, and then you will have success" (Joshua 1:8).

The laws of God were not merely for the children of Israel to utilise in the promised land. It is true that there are aspects of the law which were for that land and that time, such as the seed laws and the land laws, so there are in relation to the law, aspects of continuity and discontinuity which we must properly understand today.

One aspect of this is that the Great Commission is not limited to a small piece of land at the Eastern end of the Mediterranean. Jesus made it clear to His listeners that they were to "...make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you..." (Mat.28:19-20).

But accepting that there are some aspects of the law that are discontinued, is different to adopting a smorgasboard, or a "take it or leave it" approach to God's law. We are not free to accept and reject as we choose, but must apply ourselves as obedient servants of God, working systematically through the law to determine which aspects have continuity today.

Thankfully, there is instruction in the scriptures that enables us to see the way. Think of the food laws. The Old Testament provided a number of restrictions in terms of what the children of Israel could eat, with prohibitions on items such as pork, and some forms of seafood.

Have these changed? Yes, for Jesus declared to the disciples "Are you so lacking in understanding? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from the outside cannot defile him, because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?" Thus He declared all foods clean (Mk.7:18-19).

²¹ Gary North, "Tools of Dominion: The Case Laws of Exodus," 1990.

Paul amplified this teaching, warning of those who "...advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (I Tim.4:3-5).

We can thus deduce that if there are to be changes to God's requirements for us in the New Testament, we will be informed of these. Consequently, it is utterly inappropriate to glibly conclude concerning the commands from the Mosaic law, "Oh, that's the Old Testament. We don't need to concern ourselves with that now."

Part of the reason God deferred judgment on Judah in Josiah's day, was Josiah's humble attitude to God and His law (II Kings 22:8-20). Will we be like Josiah, or not?

More than Just Conservative (XII)

By Andrew McColl, 5/3/2013

The Bible records for us a tale of two kings, Rehoboam and Jehoshaphat. Rehoboam was Solomon's son, but the scripture tells us that

When the kingdom of Rehoboam was established and strong, he and all Israel with him forsook the law of the Lord. And it came about in king Rehoboam's fifth year, because they had been unfaithful to the Lord, that Shishak king of Egypt came up out of Egypt against Jerusalem with 1,200 chariots and 60,000 horsemen. And the people who came against him from Egypt were without number: the Lubim, the Sukkiim and the Ethiopians. He captured the fortified cities of Judah and came as far as Jerusalem. Then Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam and the princes of Judah who had gathered at Jerusalem because of Shishak, and he said to them, "Thus says the Lord, 'you have forsaken Me, so I also have forsaken you to Shishak.'" (II Chron.12:1-5).

It is essential to understand the progression here. Israel rejected the law of God; Israel was invaded. The Bible plainly connects these two events; their proximity is not co-incidental. The Biblical principle of sowing and reaping was clearly at work in Israel: "And it came about in king Rehoboam's fifth year, because they had been unfaithful to the Lord, that Shishak king of Egypt came up out of Egypt against Jerusalem" (v.2-3).

God had earlier told Israel through Moses that this is what would happen to them, if they turned away from Him. He said that

...if you do not obey the Lord your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you...the Lord shall cause you to be defeated before your enemies... (Deut.28:15, 25).

The scripture tells us that Rehoboam "...did evil because he did not set his heart to seek the Lord" (II Chron.12:14). God's commentary on what had happened to Israel was this: "...they will become his [Shishak's] slaves so that they will learn the difference between My service and the service of the kingdoms of the countries" (II Chron.12:8).

Is there a similarity between the experience of Judah under Rehoboam, and the world of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries? The implementation of political atheism (such as socialism, fascism, feminism and environmentalism) hostile to God and the family, constant wars (including the First and Second World Wars), the incessant abuse by governments of their people leading to genocide, murders and enslavement of peoples on a scale never seen before in history, manipulation of national economies by governments for short-term political gain, leading to economic catastrophies such as the Great Depression, unprecedented rates of taxation, along with a host of other evils.

The lesson? When people and nations turn from God, they run into bondage.

Judah's experience under Rehoboam can be contrasted with her experience under Jehoshaphat, located in II Chronicles 17. Jehoshaphat:

- a) ... followed the example of his father David's earlier days (v.3).
- b) [He]...sought the God of his father...[and] followed His commandments, and did not act as Israel did (v.4).
- c) The Lord established his kingdom in his control (v.5).
- d) He sent his officials... to teach (v.7).
- e) They taught in Judah, having the book of the law of the Lord with them (v.9).
- f) Now the dread of the Lord was on all the kingdoms of the lands which were around Judah, so that they did not make war against Jehoshaphat, and they brought gifts and silver as tribute to Jehoshaphat (v.10-11).
- g) Jehoshaphat grew greater and greater, and he built fortresses and store cities in Judah. He had large supplies in the cities of Judah, and warriors, valiant men, in Jerusalem (v.12-13).

Jehoshaphat was receiving the promise given by the Lord, in Joshua 1:8.

This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

North's commentary here is instructive:

*Whenever men remain covenantally faithful through obedience to God's Bible-revealed laws, social progress is not only possible, it is assured.*²²

Jesus Christ made us this enduring promise:

Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light (Mat.11:28-30).

Conclusion:

- * God identified the rejection of His law (antinomianism), as the rejection of **Himself**: "Thus says the Lord, 'You have forsaken Me, so I also have forsaken you to Shishak' " (II Chron.12:5).
- * The solution for national apostasy at any time is repentance, and a wholehearted turning to God, *including His law*, beginning amongst God's people (II Chron.7:14).
- * The Ten Commandments as the only legitimate basis for all law, must then be taught to the nations.
- * Obeying God's law is the key to a nation's safety & security.
- * Who will the church (and the nations) identify with: the rebel Rehoboam, or Jehoshaphat?
- * Our choice is clear: **God's law, or chaos; God's law, or tyranny; God's law, or God's judgment.**

²² Gary North, "Inheritance and Dominion," 1999, Ch.18, 'Miracles, Entropy and Social Theory.'

More than Just Conservative (13)

By Andrew McColl, 12/3/2013

The fact is that all law is 'religious.' All law is based on some ultimate standard of morality and ethics. Every law system is founded on the ultimate value of that system, and that ultimate value is the god of that system. The source of law for a society is the god of that society. This means that a theocracy is inescapable. All societies are theocracies. The difference is that a society that is not explicitly Christian is a theocracy of a false god.²³

God is a God of covenant,²⁴ and covenant means there are obligations to be met by both parties. Since God formally gave the law to Moses, He has viewed all departures from His law as acts of rebellion and treason. Even before the giving of the law to Moses, individuals and nations (such as Sodom and Gomorrah) were judged for their breaches of the law. How could this be? It was known to them, since the original revelation given to Adam.

If we break the commandments, we are judged. Abraham said to God, "...shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?" (Gen.18:25).

Thus the burden of the Old Testament prophets was always to call Israel back to the law, pointing out where Israel had departed. The prophets did not announce something new to Israel; they were not innovative but were conservatives, endeavouring to bring Israel back to the ancient paths God had laid down, hundreds of years earlier. And they made this abundantly clear: do nothing, and you will be judged.

God through Isaiah the prophet reproached Israel, "if only you had paid attention to My commandments! Then your well-being would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea" (Isa.48:18).

Amos warned Israel, "... For three transgressions of Judah and for four I will not revoke its punishment, because they rejected the law of the Lord and have not kept His statutes..." (Amos 2:4).

The Bible's standard individual attitude is promoted in the Psalms:

"...his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night" (Ps.1:2).

"the law of his God is in his heart; his feet do not slip" (Ps.37:31).

"...how blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in His commandments. His descendents will be mighty on earth; the generation of the upright will be blessed" (Ps.112:1-2).

God said that "Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws" (Gen.26:5). Jesus instructed us that "He who has My commandments and keeps them

²³ David Chilton, "Paradise Restored," 1999, p.219.

²⁴ See Ray Sutton, "That You May Prosper," 1987.

is the one who loves Me...” (Jn.14:21). He also indicated that “if you keep My commandments you will abide in My love...” (Jn.15:10).

Paul commands us to “bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.6:2).

Thus the church has no reason to be conservative, unless that conservatism is based in the law of God. In fact, any person, institution or nation that is not committed to the law of God is ultimately going to be judged by God.

*The foundations of all law are in essence religious and theological: they are questions of ultimacy and moral necessity. Law without faith is an impossibility. Every law order is a moral and a theological order, a structuring of society in terms of a fundamental faith.*²⁵

Christians who say today, “Oh, but we are under grace, not under law,” generally don’t know what they are talking about. Sinful men have always needed God’s grace to relate to Him. If we don’t receive grace, we will receive judgment. Grace is a fundamental necessity for us to relate to God, but law and grace are not opposites in scripture. They are both fundamentals of our relationship with God.

Man has always needed a framework of appropriate behaviour to live by. We get it from the law of God. That was its purpose.

*Only when we return to a Biblical foundation for law shall we again have a return to justice and order under law. ‘Unless the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain that build it.’ ”*²⁶

²⁵ Rousas Rushdoony, “Roots of Reconstruction,” 1991, p.893-4.

²⁶ Rousas Rushdoony, “Law and Liberty,” 1984, p.5-7.

More than Just Conservative (14)

By Andrew McColl, 19/3/2013

The Corruption of the Pharisees

Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd (Mat.9:35-36).

Apart from Jesus and John the Baptist, there was a total absence of quality religious leadership in Israel, before the church was born. Who else was there? This partially explains the phenomenal reception Jesus received.

The people “were distressed and dispirited.” Why? The Pharisees had no solutions for them; in fact, they were a part of the problem. They began to show they were a part of the problem, when they excommunicated the man who Jesus healed from blindness (Jn.9:34). Then they really showed it when they had Jesus crucified.

But when the Good Shepherd (Jn.10:14) came along, things began to radically change. The Bible says that when He began to teach, “they were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as one of the scribes” (Mk.1:22). And when He cast out demons, that was an even more powerful demonstration of His authority.

There was a significant difference between the faith delivered to the Old Testament saints, and the religious beliefs of the Pharisees in Jesus’ day. The Pharisees purported to be faithful to the Old Testament revelation, but this was a sham. They held to Judaism, which was a humanistic corruption of Old Testament faith. We know that they had no commitment to justice because before Jesus’ last Passover, “...they plotted together to seize Jesus by stealth and kill Him. But they were saying, ‘not during the festival, otherwise a riot might occur among the people’” (Mat.26:4-5).

The Pharisees, professing to be champions of God’s word, were in fact its enemies and perverters.²⁷

It is commonly asserted today that the Pharisees were theological conservatives, but this is nonsense. The Pharisees’ commitment was merely to a hypocritical outward observance, rather than inward obedience. This is shown clearly in Jesus’ commentary on the Jews in Jn.5:45-47: “Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would have believed Me, for He wrote of Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?” Jesus later said, “Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you carries out the Law?” (Jn.7:19)

The Pharisees didn’t believe Moses’ writings, and so they didn’t believe Jesus’ words either. While they may have purported to be conservatives they were essentially revisionists, attempting to turn the

²⁷ Rousas Rushdoony, “The Institutes of Biblical Law,” 1973, p.706.

Mosaic law into a document that would suit their agenda. Matthew 23 attests to their fundamental hypocrisy, while Jesus earlier had made the serious accusation that the Pharisees "...condemned the innocent" (Mat.12:7).

In recognising the significance of Israel's religion to the nation, the Romans had acted very shrewdly. They permitted a continuation of the high-priest's very lucrative monopoly on the sale of sacrificial animals, along with the money-changing in the temple, on the condition that he be replaced every year. That way, they maintained a control of the nation's religious leaders; the two groups in an unholy coalition, needed and used each other to maintain their political and religious power bases.²⁸

The evidence that Israel's religious leaders were politically compromised, self-serving and corrupt is evident in many passages in John's gospel. After Lazarus' resurrection,

the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, 'What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. If we let Him go on like this, all men will come and believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.' But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, 'You know nothing at all, nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish' (Jn.11:47-50).

Caiaphas was the high priest, and was utterly indifferent to the fact that Jesus was an innocent man. Already he is indicating that Jesus' death would be necessary, to protect the political/religious power relationship (of which he was a direct beneficiary), which had evolved under Roman rule.

The issue, said Caiaphas, is this: who should live, this man, or us and our power over the nation? Someone is going to die: either Jesus, or us and our rule over the nation. Take your choice. No moral question is raised. The issue is seen as one of power and control. When faced with this choice, there was no longer any hesitation... They were now self-consciously planning the death of the One who had revealed Himself to be God's Son and the Messiah.²⁹

Jesus' condemnation of the Pharisees in Matthew 23 is one of the strongest denunciations of any individual or group found in historical literature, but it something much more. It is a warning from the Son of God to anyone who aspires to any form of religious leadership: be faithful.

²⁸ See Rousas Rushdoony, "The Gospel of John," 2000, p.153, 154.

²⁹ Rushdoony, *ibid*, p.154.

More than Just Conservative (15)

By Andrew McColl, 26/3/2013

The Law in the New Testament

Our Lord readily submitted to the whole of God's law. At the time of the temptations, Jesus quoted from the law three times to resist and refute the devil (Mat.4:1-11). In dealing with the Pharisees, who had accused the disciples of being in breach of the elders' traditions, Jesus quoted from the law, highlighting their hypocrisy (Mat.15:1-14). In teaching the disciples, Jesus taught from the law (Luke 24:25-27).

Jesus came and spoke as a king. He spoke "*with authority*" (Mat.7:29). All kings have laws and rules. Any kingdom without law presupposes anarchy. Jesus submitted to and taught from the law, because it was *His* law:

*the warfare of Jesus was not against Moses. It was against the scribes and Pharisees who perverted Moses. It is a perversion of Scripture to separate the law and the prophets from Jesus. The Mount of Transfiguration witnessed to their unity.*³⁰

Jesus made His attitude towards the law abundantly clear, in Mat.5:17-18: "*Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfil. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.*" This means that Christians should always reject careless and foolish assumptions about the law, which are not found in scripture. "*Either God's revealed law is sovereign in society or else autonomous man's declared law is sovereign.*"³¹

*When faced by Jesus, the scribes and Pharisees, who saw themselves as the guardians of the law, found themselves face to face with the law incarnate. Jesus manifested the true law of God, not the pharisaic versions of it, in all His being. In the hands of the religious leaders, the law had become a yoke of bondage (Gal.5:1), not the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25; 2:12).*³²

Paul and the other apostles quoted from the law as though it was perfectly normative, to be obeyed by them and by us. (See Ro.15:4; I Cor.9:8-10; 14:34; Eph.6:1-3). Paul makes it clear (see Gal.1:13-17) that Judaism had been his former way of life, before becoming a Christian. Not anymore. Judaism was *not* the Old Testament faith. It was an attempt to implement an ancient heresy, justification by works, which is *never* taught in scripture.

*Abraham is chosen by God and made just by God's grace, not by his personal merit or works. Implicit and explicit in all that Paul continues to say is what Calvin briefly summarized thus: 'there is no place in the church for any man who is not a son of Abraham.'*³³ *And we are sons of Abraham only by God's grace through faith, not by blood or works.*³⁴

Five times in the Book of Galatians the apostle Paul names the issue he is vigorously contending with: Gal.2:16 (3 times); 3:11 and 5:4. Gal.2:16 says, "*...a man is not justified by the works of the law but*

³⁰ Rousas Rushdoony, "Institutes," p.714.

³¹ Gary North, "Inheritance and Dominion," 1999, ch.18.

³² Rousas Rushdoony, "The Gospel of John," 2000, p.145.

³³ John Calvin, "Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians," 1948, p.87.

³⁴ Rousas Rushdoony, "Romans and Galatians," 2000, p.344.

through faith in Christ Jesus, even as we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law; since by the works of the law no flesh will be justified.”

Was Paul being critical of the law itself? No, for he said in another place, that “*the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good*” (Ro.7:12). What the apostle Paul contended with and was critical of, were attempts by some within the church, particularly the Pharisees, to turn the law of God *into a means of salvation*- something which it was never designed for. “Galatians is a polemic against the Judaizers who insisted on the keeping of the ceremonial law as a way of justification” (cf. Acts 15:1, 5; Gal.5:1-6).³⁵ North’s comments are also helpful here:

*Paul was at war with Judaizers who were inside the church. They sought to bring gentiles under the mosaic ceremonial law, meaning laws associated with the priestly status of old Covenant, national Israel...Paul [in I Timothy 1:1-11] is identifying Judaizers, not gentile antinomians or gentile theologians as the false teachers of Ephesus...Paul asks Timothy to tell them to stop teaching their version of Pharisaic legalism.*³⁶

This helps us understand Paul’s comment, when he taught that “...*you are not under law but under grace*” (Ro.6:14). Judaism was a serious problem within the early church. Rushdoony is clear on this point:

*Works are under a curse when they represent human activity apart from God and His sovereignty. Such works seek to vindicate man’s autonomy and to justify man before God and humanity. Such works posit the possibility of creating an order outside of God and thus represent the premise of Genesis 3:5, every man as his own god. Men can use God’s own law to attempt to justify themselves before God by uniting God’s law, as filtered through man’s hand, as a means of furthering their autonomy.*³⁷

This explains Paul’s question in Gal.4:21: “*Tell me, you who want to be under the law, do you not listen to the law?*” The Judaizers were effectively refusing the notion of God’s grace, believing that genealogical descent from Abraham and a superficial commitment to God’s law would both be a means of justification for them, when they should have known that no one can obey God’s law perfectly.

Judaism was thus hostile to the Christian faith, because it was:

- a) Humanistic- Jesus said to the Pharisees, that “...*you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves*” (Mat.23:15).
- b) Nationalistic.
- c) Hypocritical and racist-Mat.23:23-29; Jn. 4:9; 8:48.
- d) A works based religion focused on the outward observance of Mosaic law, such as circumcision- Gal.6:12.
- e) Religiously bigoted- Jn.9:24-34.³⁸

Conclusion:

For the Pharisees, God’s law was a weapon of assault against anyone who did not fit their religious and political agenda, regardless of their innocence. But their criminal misrepresentations of God’s law only revealed their hypocrisy. It was they who were evil, not the law.

The law of God given to Moses, summarised in the Ten Commandments, was His gracious provision to a nation which had just emerged from the slavery of Egypt. It is the only true law of

³⁵ Greg Bahnsen, “By This Standard,” 1991, p.309.

³⁶ Gary North, “Hierarchy and Dominion,” 2012, p.39, 47.

³⁷ Rushdoony, *ibid*, p.345.

³⁸ Andrew McColl, “The Great Christian Revolution,” chapter 3.

liberty mankind has ever had. Every other one has been a counterfeit. The Psalmist confessed as much when he wrote, “*I will walk at liberty, for I seek Your precepts*” (Ps.119:45).

*Christians must confront the fact that God requires them to impose His law for the state upon all men, whether men like it or not. The universe is not a democracy, but a Kingdom. If Christians do not impose God’s laws upon non-Christians, then non-Christians will impose man’s laws upon Christians... The law of man bares its fangs of iron increasingly against the righteous.*³⁹

³⁹ James Jordan, “The Law of the Covenant,” 1984, p.29.

More than Just Conservative (16)

By Andrew McColl, 2/4/2013

He [Solomon] said, 'O Lord, the God of Israel, there is no god like you in heaven or on earth, keeping covenant and showing lovingkindness to Your servants who walk before you with all their heart' (II Chron.6:14).

From Genesis onwards, God revealed Himself as a God of covenant. He brings people into covenant with Himself through sacrifice, and in the New Covenant this is the blood of Jesus Christ.

It is God's covenant with man through Jesus Christ which must be at the foundations of every society. It is not merely a political doctrine; it has religious roots in scripture. The Christian roots of true conservatism have been evident throughout history, going back as least as far as the Magna Carta, which was written by an Archbishop. It is these religious roots that generally lead conservatives to be distrustful of government in general and to favour small government, individual freedoms, balanced budgets and lower taxation.

These are good, but these are not enough. Why? We have to deal with the issue of God's covenant.

In 1985, a U. S. Anglican minister named Ray Sutton made a remarkable discovery. He had been considering the Bible's symbols of covenant: in the Old Testament, circumcision and Passover, and in the New Testament, baptism and communion. What did they have in common, and what precisely, is the covenant?

One Old Testament scholar he consulted, Meredith Kline, suggested that Deuteronomy's structure had significant parallels with the ancient pagan world's suzerain (king-vassal) treaties. The king (suzerain) would initially announce his sovereignty over a nation, demand loyalty, impose sanctions for disobedience, offer protection for obedience, publish a law code, and establish the rules of succession.⁴⁰ Kline suggested that these might have five, six or seven parts. Were these treaties original documents, or had they in their day, been taken from Biblical literature? Intrigued, Sutton looked at Deuteronomy himself, to see if there was an identifiable structure; he found five parts.

Then, he examined other books of the Bible that were known to be divided into 5 parts: the Psalms, and Matthew's Gospel. He also found a five part structure in some of Paul's epistles, such as Romans. This led him to a conclusion: *there was a 5 part structure to the Biblical covenant.*⁴¹

A .The Covenant Structure:

*What is a covenant? God comes before man and 'lays down the law' - His law.
Man must either conform to God and His law, or be destroyed. As He told Adam,
"Eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and you will die." God deals*

⁴⁰Gary North, "Liberating Planet Earth," 1987, p.52.

⁴¹Ray Sutton, "That You May Prosper," 1997. Sutton details his discoveries and conclusions. This paper draws heavily from his work.

*with men as a king deals with his subjects. His covenant is to prosper us when we obey and curse us when we rebel.*⁴²

Sutton concluded that a Biblical covenant has five sections:

- 1) An announcement that God is transcendent- the supreme Creator and deliverer of mankind. God is completely superior to and different from men and the world He created, yet He is also present with it: *immanent*.
- 2) The establishment of a *hierarchy* to enforce God's authority on earth.
- 3) A set of *rules* or laws man must follow in exercising his dominion over the earth. God will judge man by how he follows these rules.
- 4) A list of *judgments* that will be imposed by God, who blesses man for obedience and curses man for disobedience.
- 5) A program of *inheritance*- a lawful transition that mortal men need in order to extend their dominion over creation.⁴³

This can be abbreviated, this way:

- 1) Transcendence/Immanence (presence)
- 2) Hierarchy/Authority (submission)
- 3) Law/Dominion (stipulations)
- 4) Judgment/Oath (sanctions)
- 5) Inheritance/Continuity (survival)

B. The Structure Elaborated:

Remarkably, the Great Commission itself is essentially a paraphrase of the five components of the covenant: "*All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age*" (Mat.28:18-20).

Covenantally, these verses can be considered this way:

- 1) Christ is sovereign over heaven and earth, yet present with His people. He is both transcendent (high above) and immanent (present) with us.
- 2) He is the Supreme Commander over a hierarchy, so His followers are to bring the nations under Christ's authority through baptism.
- 3) His kingdom is a kingdom of law, meaning ethics, for Christians are commanded to teach men to observe (obey) all that He commands.
- 4) He judges the nations, for baptism is a covenant sign, a form of oath taken before God; violating the terms of the Biblical covenant always brings cursing (Deut.28:15-68), while obedience brings blessings (Deut.28:1-14).

⁴² Gary North, "Inherit the Earth," 1987, p.5.

⁴³ North, p.6.

5) There is continuity over the generations of men, for He promises to be with His people always, to the end of the age.⁴⁴

The knowledge of the covenant structure ought to send us Christians back to the drawing board. Why? We have nothing to contribute to society, unless we are operating in obedience to the covenant, based in the blood of Jesus.

Jesus said, “You are My friends, if you do what I command you” (Jn.15:14). He spoke the language of covenant, found right throughout scripture, such as Deuteronomy 29:9: “So keep the word of this covenant to do them, that you may prosper in all that you do.”

If Jesus spoke and lived the language of covenant, isn't it time His people did too?

⁴⁴ Gary Demar, “Ruler of the Nations,” 1987, p.4.

More than Just Conservative (17)

By Andrew McColl, 9/4/2013

Earthly slavery, as manifested clearly in the history of the Exodus, involves at least three factors: slavery to food, slavery to the past, and slavery to the present. The Hebrews cursed Moses, for he had served them as a deliverer. He had enabled them to cast off the chains of bondage. They looked to the uncertainty that lay before them (the Red Sea) and the chariots behind them, and they wailed. They had lost what they regarded as external security in Egypt, a welfare State existence, and they resented Moses' leadership.⁴⁵

For some two hundred years, believers have been developing a dismissive view of the Old Testament law. "Oh, that's from the Old Testament, and we don't need to bother with that anymore," is the usual attitude in evangelical circles.

But we've thrown the baby out with the bath-water. There are aspects of both continuity and discontinuity in relation to God's law from the Old Testament, which the Bible explains or infers. The Ten Commandments remain eternally, but the focus of enforcement of the Fourth Commandment (dealing with the Sabbath) has shifted to the individual: "one person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind" (Ro.14:5).

This is a very important Biblical principle. It has been the basis of the West's liberties, which are now in decline. It means that every person is responsible to God for their actions.

You want to go overseas, go to university, get married or start a business? No problem. It's your life. It may or may not be a mistake, but it is your responsibility. And it has been this Biblical culture of individual responsibility (with the associated opportunities and risks), which has been at the root of the West's rapid development in the last 300 years.

People should remember this fact: you can't replace something with nothing. Yes, there are aspects of Old Testament law (such as the animal sacrifices, the food laws, the seed laws and the land laws) which are fulfilled in the New Testament, because the focus today geographically is not a tiny piece of land in the Middle East, but on "...all the nations..." (Mat.28:19). God's law is His plan for every nation.

But when people replace the Bible's overall law and culture, there is always a price they'll pay. If you refuse individual responsibility, someone else will have to take it up for you, and in the modern era, that has generally been the State. And the State's representative has generally been an inefficient, self-serving, tax-funded bureaucracy.

Think of law-enforcement in the United States. It began with local police, then early in the twentieth century, they added the FBI. Its 2011 budget? \$7.9 billion. Then in the 1940's the CIA

⁴⁵ Gary North, "Moses and Pharaoh," 1986, p.256.

came along to supposedly deal with matters of international security, and since 2001, the US has a Department of Homeland Security, and a Transport Safety Authority.

Is US law-enforcement any better now? It's hard to believe. Bureaucratic institutions tend to grow not because of need, but because it's a matter of status. The leaders want the power and prestige (and money) that comes with leading a growing organisation. So they say to their political superiors, "Give us more!"

Efficiency? Irrelevant.

Ethics and justice? Forget it.

Because individual liberty and responsibility are largely ignored, massive, inefficient and sometimes corrupt bureaucracies have to keep finding justifications for their existence. And they do, even if they have to invent them.

And what seems to frequently happen? The innocent suffer abuse.

Can the innocent do anything about it? Mostly, no. How things have changed. Today, if your home is targeted by a SWAT team for a drug bust in the US, you could easily be killed. Law enforcement agencies can be effectively above the law. As Will Grigg writes,

The Milwaukee Police Department [holds down the number two spot in the national police brutality rankings](#). Its distinguished contributions in the field of state-sponsored crime include [a lengthy and growing list](#) of suspicious deaths of people in police custody.⁴⁶

Furthermore, plausible allegations about both the FBI and the CIA have been made, linking them to many assassinations, including that of President Kennedy in 1963, and his brother Robert in 1968.

But you thought it was the "land of the free and the home of the brave?" It's time to wake up to how things have deteriorated.

When God delivered the Israelites from Egypt, they just left; there were no border restrictions. When Joseph and Mary decided at God's direction to flee Israel to evade Herod, they simply got up in the night and left for Egypt (Mat.2:13-15).

What if you had to do the same thing? Got a passport? Got a permit? And what if you decided to go on a Friday night? Well, you would have to wait till the relevant office opened on Monday. Sorry about that.

And what if the bureaucrat essential for your approval takes exception to you? That's why all restrictions on international movement (including passports) are generally oppressive in nature; the Berlin wall was not built with a Biblical world-view in mind. When a nation declares to its people, "you have to have our permission to leave," they are saying in effect, "you are our slaves." This was the attitude of many Eastern Bloc countries up until about 1990, and is reminiscent of the oppression of the Israelites under Pharaoh.

46 Will Grigg, "Meet Ed Flynn – Milwaukee Crime Lord, Citizen Disarmament Advocate," Lew Rockwell's website, 1/3/2013.

A church acquaintance who immigrated from South Africa recently told me he had to pay \$80,000 to come to Australia with his wife.

Something else: what if I have been visiting the south of France, and return to Australia with a few bottles of champagne, along with some Belgian chocolate, and some vintage, valuable French pistols that I'm fond of?

Anything wrong with that? Biblically, no, but according to the present laws, it would probably raise major issues with the Customs Department, and I wouldn't be let out of the airport. The guns could be confiscated. After all, I could be about to commit a crime!

The irony is, that

*a well-armed populace of law-abiding citizens has a very great defence against criminals, gangs, and those who wish to do harm to the citizen base. An unarmed public, on the other hand, can do virtually nothing to defend themselves.*⁴⁷

This goes to the heart of Biblical liberty. The Bible never focuses on what I might do with whatever is in my hands, as a potential criminal; every person is a potential criminal. It deals only with what I *have* done. The difference is very important in how people are treated before the law.

In Australia, we have seven State and Federal Education Departments. Why?

Well, we ignored the fact that the Bible makes parents responsible for education, and so we handed that task to the State, and the results have been horrific. Not only is it costing the taxpayer \$14,500 in 2013 to send a child to a State school, but we've put the people with a vested interest in the Department's perpetuation in charge.

Thus education (as in Nazi Germany) is subject to political control, the foxes are in charge of the hen-house, and parents had better not sneeze without Departmental permission. They could be prosecuted for taking responsibility for their children's education. What a bizarre perversion of God's justice.

In a free Biblical society, you can generally do as you wish, within Biblical boundaries. It represents a level of libertarianism we would be shocked by today. But in our present evil "nanny-state" environment, the key thing is to get permission first, even for something totally innocuous like buying a gun. Even advertising at sporting events, and labelling on cigarette packets are State regulated. Thus decision-making processes are shifted from individuals and families to the State, something God never intended.

And the worst of it? The Church accepts it.

⁴⁷ Anthony Gucciardi, "A Brief and Bloody History of Gun Control," (courtesy of Lew Rockwell's website,) 23/2/2013.

Conclusion:

When Israel turned from God and wanted a king "...like all the nations" (I Sam.8:5), God made it clear that "they have rejected Me from being king over them" (v.7), and that there would be consequences (v.10-18).

And what were some of these? A high tax rate of 10%, property confiscation, a general expansion of government control, and State sponsored murder (see I Sam.22:16-23).

We in the West have shown we are no different to Israel in Saul's day. There have been, and there will be painful consequences for our poor and evil choices: massive, overbearing bureaucracies, social oppression by government and high tax rates in place of godly freedom and responsibility: God's just judgments on us for running back to the slavery of Egypt.

But all this can change. It must change, if the West is to have a future of blessing and prosperity under God.

John the Baptist was a Biblical prophet: a radical in the Biblical tradition. He preached that "the axe is already laid at the root of the trees..." (Mat.3:10). We need his solution today.

Individuals, families and churches must begin the long religious and cultural walk out of Egypt, to the promised land of God's glorious purpose.

This may take us generations to accomplish, just as it took us generations to get to the bad state we're in. The time is not the issue, the issue is that we start to move. And the first and simplest place to begin to act in obedience to God is in taking responsibility for our children's education.

It's time to move, and it begins with obedience and repentance on the part of God's people. Are you ready?

It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery (Gal.5:1).

More than Just Conservative (18)

By Andrew McColl, 16/4/2013

Woe to those who scheme iniquity, who work out evil on their beds! When morning comes, they do it, for it is in the power of their hands. They covet fields and then seize them and houses, and take them away. They rob a man and his house, a man and his inheritance (Mic.2:1-2).

Messianic government tries to be society's Messiah. It thus has to know all things, be all-powerful and infallible, along with being totally just and wonderfully compassionate. Just like the real Messiah. But these are very big challenges for us mortals. For Jesus Christ, these challenges were fine, but for us?

It's way too hard. History has shown that whenever governments (explicitly or implicitly) hold out the idea of their Messianic abilities, things tend to come unstuck very quickly. Not only that, but the lives of people in the community are then very often at risk. Think of the US.

America has plenty of enemies but they can probably relax. Who among them could do to the US the amount of damage that it is doing to itself?

Terrorists brought down some buildings in New York and punched a hole in the Pentagon. But it was not a terrorist who brought down the US economy at a staggering cost of more than \$US20 trillion (Australian \$19.4 trillion) in losses in the value of family homes, shares and retirement funds.

It was, of course, poor US policy and weak governance. In other words, it was self-inflicted, man-made and entirely avoidable. The enemies of the US can only dream of inflicting this much damage on the superpower.⁴⁸

One of the hardest things for Messianic governments to do, is to leave the free-market alone. The free-market has lots of lumps and bumps; it can certainly be a rough ride. But economic Messiahs want to "sort things out." They want to "make it easier for people." So, they interfere in the free-market.

Where?

Anywhere. Take Health. Socialised health-care was ostensibly to help the poor have better access to health-care. But whenever governments involve themselves in almost any community service activity, the cost to the goes up dramatically.

Why? Decisions are not made by private individuals anymore. Governments have to employ vast numbers of bureaucrats to check on and oversee everything. Rather than individuals making their own private decisions about doctors and hospitals, some decisions are made for them by bureaucrats.

⁴⁸ Peter Hartcher, 'Sound of Silence as new Debt Woes Grow,' "The Sydney Morning Herald," 26/2/2013.

But bureaucrats don't have a vested interest in an outcome. They merely have a job to do, and if it goes wrong, so what? They rarely lose their job.

Hunters and homeless people in Louisiana are rightly outraged after state health officials forced a homeless shelter to throw out nearly a ton of perfectly good venison.

The meat that had been donated to the Shreveport-Bossier Rescue Mission could have fed more than 3,000 people. Instead, it was tossed in trash bins by officials from the Department of Health and Hospitals who say that state law prohibits the serving of venison in homeless shelters.

Not only did the officials toss the meat, they doused it with Clorox to make sure it couldn't be eaten by animals or, presumably, people.

“Deer meat is not permitted to be served in a shelter, restaurant or any other public eating establishment in Louisiana,” an official told Fox News in an email. “While we applaud the good intentions of the hunters who donated this meat, we must protect the people who eat at the Rescue Mission, and we cannot allow a potentially serious health threat to endanger the public.”

Richard Campbell, co-founder of Hunters for the Hungry, a charitable group that donates wild game to shelters, said hunters across the state and in Mississippi are outraged about the statement and the waste.⁴⁹

That's why there is almost nothing that ought to be left in the hands of government today, or at anytime. They have enough difficulty staying out of trouble when they are left with only law and infrastructure. It is the individuals of the community that ought to be making the big decisions. Decentralisation is Biblical; it's always the way to travel for lovers of liberty. This is an ancient but fading mark of conservative political thought.

Good government starts by recognising we are not the Messiah, and will never be. Joseph acknowledged to Pharaoh that "...it is not in me..." (Gen.41:16). "The government shall rest upon His shoulders" (Isa.9:6), not ours. It also starts by recognising there are real limits on what governments can successfully accomplish, and interfering in the free-market through government policy always proves to be a form of community abuse.

Stay away from it.

⁴⁹ "Let Them Eat Cake? Government Destroys 1,600 Pounds of Deer Meat for Homeless Just Because," Tad Cronn, [news@godfatherpolitics.com], 27/2/2013.

More than Just Conservative (19)

By Andrew McColl, 23/4/2013

Christianity's continual willingness to stand against culturally approved evil in the name of Christ ... makes the church a revolutionary force. Christian revolution begins with the individual and has its concrete effect on the culture. Whether or not it exercises control, it always takes its stand with the external requirements of God against the idolatrous attractions of the moment. ... All orders, old and new, are subject to the same eternal law that the church serves, and therefore are judged by the same standard.⁵⁰

When people's focus shifts from God, it will go somewhere. And the institutional focus of modern humanistic man has been the State. Womb to tomb, cradle to grave, when all else fails, the State must save. This is of course a form of idolatry, going back to the days of the Caesars. We Christians resisted and repudiated it then; we must do it again today.

If the State must save, the logical conclusion is salvation by legislation. Identify a problem, then talk to your politician: that becomes the process. Thus there has been a shift in power in the West from the individual, the family and the Church to the State, and this has been happening for a century, probably longer. But this shift is retrogressive; it only initiates a downward spiral in any community, where politicians are somehow supposed to right all of society's problems, both real and imagined.

You're not sure about that? Look at the tax rates. At Federation in Australia in 1901, there was no income tax, no GST, no fuel tax. Now, the maximum rate is 47%.

And you thought we were free? But salvation from Canberra has never eventuated, regardless of how much tax they charge us. And the more they charge us, the more suspicious and cynical everyone becomes about politicians.

Proponents of the Messiah State are religious people in their own way, driven by their beliefs. Any sniff of a problem, and something must be done! "Take those wicked capitalists to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission!"

As the Courier Mail reports,

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission is investigating whether the supermarket chains have been abusing their market power. It has also warned that the supermarkets' 8c a litre discount vouchers for petrol are undermining competition.⁵¹

Salvation by legislation is the logical corollary of the Messiah State, and has lots of unforeseen and negative consequences for the whole of the community. There is presently a debate in Australia about the propriety of the Coles and Woolworths supermarket duopoly, with some people claiming

⁵⁰ Herbert Schlossberg, "Idols for Destruction: Christian Faith and its Confrontation with American Culture," 1983, p.325.

⁵¹ Jane Harper, "Woolies Takes Ethics to the Bank," 'The Courier Mail,' 1/3/2013, p.32.

they should be forcibly broken up. But Coles and Woolworths have gotten as big as they are (Woolworths turns over more than \$1 billion a week), not because they have enjoyed legislative protection, but because they've been successful for a long time at buying and selling groceries.

Anything wrong about that? That's the very thing that the free market rewards. And, they are both very big employers. You harm those businesses? You'll harm the people working for them.

The fact that there has been a price war between these two companies over milk, putting dairy farmers under considerable pressure, but bringing down the price of milk to the consumer, is beside the point. Anyone who enters an industry such as dairy-farming must be prepared to face the challenges that come with that industry. No industry has profit guarantees, nor should it, and dairy farming is no exception.

If dairy farmers can't make a profit long-term by selling their milk to Coles or Woolworths, they have a number of options. They may look for other buyers for their milk, or they may seek to join with others to produce milk products such as cream, cheese, custard and yoghurt, perhaps in a boutique market. (Economists call this vertical integration). Or they may get out of dairy-farming altogether. Getting out should always be an option.

But it is entirely inappropriate to try and bring some legislative pressure on either of these companies, which are both merely large retailers.

Businesses can be adversely affected in other ways by political attempts to impose "fairness." Fairness is a subjective term that means different things to different people. Petrol prices are controlled in Australia (an utterly unscriptural and evil concept), and increases have to be "approved." (Too bad if your company cannot make a profit without an approved price increase. You might just have to go broke).

Emotive terms have been coined about business practices, such as "price gouging," and "predatory pricing." One would think that Scrooge was alive today, and he's a retailer! These terms imply that companies have some wicked motivation in charging what they do, or are in some way taking advantage of public vulnerability. But if anyone wants to charge a price for their product, it is almost certainly because they have something in mind, which in a free country is perfectly legitimate: profit.

It's always an advantage to a retailer if his is the only institution of its kind in the locality. He may enjoy a form of monopoly. But he also knows something else (or he should). If he charges high his customers will note it, the market will respond, another similar institution will be set up nearby, and his monopolistic days will be over. Even if he doesn't charge excessively, his monopoly can be easily overturned.

The free-market can be a rough ride, and retailing is tough at times. But it's a lot tougher if governments are hell-bent on imposing evil, draconian ideas on institutions, in the name of "fairness." What humanistic governments call "fairness," God generally calls "oppression."

In fact, the recurring theme of the prophets that confronted Israel was the nation's obligation to turn from oppression, and to deal justly. And the most common form of oppression is economic.

Your rulers are rebels and companions of thieves; everyone loves a bribe and chases after rewards. They do not defend the orphan, nor does the widow's plea come before them (Isa.1:23).

This means that Christians must be much more aware of the dangers of intrusive government involvement in business activities; they are generally immoral and utterly unscriptural. Moreover, the price for the consumer will probably rise. There is a place for government for ensuring accurate weights and measures, but beyond this, show me the justice? Tariffs and subsidies to selected industries are merely subtle forms of taxation.

When God called Jeremiah, He said "I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant" (Jer.1:10). John the Baptist proclaimed that "the axe is already laid at the root of the trees..." (Mat.3:10). Peter, the Church's first preacher proclaimed, "Repent, and each of you be baptised in the Name of Jesus Christ..." (Acts 2:38).

Thus the ministry of the prophet (and the Church has a prophetic ministry) is frequently negative initially, to tear down unscriptural ideas and institutions that have no place in society, before a proper building can take place.

Conclusion:

It was Chesterton who commented that when people refuse to believe in God, they don't believe in nothing; they believe in anything. This has led to the rise of the Messianic state in the modern era.

But salvation will never be found in the State; God will never permit it. In fact, He is actively opposed to every attempt to provide salvation apart from Him, just as He actively opposed Pharaoh's Messianic State and his enslavement of the children of Israel, and ultimately destroyed him.

And if He is actively opposed, as His servants, we should be too. I close with a quote from Schlossberg:

Even the good kings of ancient Judah, who expelled the worship of the Baals from the temple, left the Asherim and their devotees undisturbed on the hills. So rooted in communal life these deities became, that it was unthinkable to be rid of them. ...The West is similarly plagued with major and minor idols, some of them all but invisible. It is hard to imagine a more important or satisfying role than to embark on the spiritual, intellectual, and political adventure of working toward stripping them, root and branch, from the land.⁵²

⁵² Herbert Schlossberg, quoted in Gary North, (Ed), "Tactics for Christian Resistance," 1983, p.81.

More than Just Conservative (20)

By Andrew McColl, 30/4/2013

So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (Jn.8:31-32).

People who have never known freedom think that bondage is normal. It is, or it has been, for them. When the children of Israel were set free by God at the Exodus, slavery had been their lot for hundreds of years. They were utterly unprepared for the notions of freedom and responsibility. When they had been set free, and God began to challenge them to trust in Him more fully, they remembered what they had in Egypt (such as it was), and they frequently wanted to go back.

The rabble who were among them had greedy desires; and also the sons of Israel wept again and said, “Who will give us meat to eat? We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic, but now our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna.... Why did we ever leave Egypt?” (Num. 11:4-6, 20).

The idea of freedom and responsibility under God was too much. God needed to re-educate them, and that was painful. For them, freedom was frightening. That’s what slavery does to people.

Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed (John 6:26-27).

He recognized why He was popular. These people wanted handouts. They were committed to miracles as a substitute for work. They wanted manna from heaven. He reminded them of what His ministry was about. It was not the creation of a welfare state. Rome had that: bread and circuses. Jesus' ministry was a challenge to the theology of bread and circuses.⁵³

The West is like this today. All over the West there is an “entitlement mentality.” In Australia we have middle-class welfare payments for families with children, even for families earning over \$100,000 annually. We have a “Baby-Bonus” worth thousands for any female who has a child. With the passing of time, people begin to think of these entitlements as a right. Little do they acknowledge that while they are receiving this money, they or others firstly have to part with vast sums of money in taxes.

But what if all family payments and Baby Bonuses were eliminated? Along with that, what if governments got right out of the education business? What if governments said, “You have

⁵³ Gary North, “Christian Economics, Mercantilist Style,” (www.garynorth.com), 6/3/2013.

‘em? You feed, clothe and educate ‘em. That’s your God-given job. We’ll just govern the country.”

These are the things that the Church must press for. Why?

Because it will lead to stronger families, and ultimately a stronger Church and a stronger nation. It will significantly reduce the communities’ dependence on government payments, leading to less taxation. And it will mean that the focus of power in the nation, which for a century has been moving towards centralised government, will begin to shift back again towards the individual, the family, and the Church.

The more power goes to government, the more likely it is that government will abuse that power. No century in human history has witnessed the abuse of government power like the twentieth century did, and the process continues today. Cutting off that power will lead to people making decisions, not influenced by public money. It will reduce the ability of government to coerce people. It will mean greater freedom for individuals, families and the Church.

Economically, it will lead to greater private investment and prosperity. People will be able to do what they want to do. They may very well have more money, because the size and responsibility of government has been reduced. That will mean less taxation.

Religious people sometimes go into denial about entitlements. Could that be because they’re up to their eye-balls in them? When Jesus promised the Pharisees that the truth would make them free, they said to Him “...we are Abraham’s servants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone...” (Jn.8:33).

Purchasing the leadership of their enemies or of potential threats was the Roman way. Timothy H. Parsons in his book, The Rule of Empires, describes the Romans as “deft practitioners of soft power.” Rome preferred to rule the conquered and the potentially hostile through “semiautonomous client kings which the Senate euphemistically termed ‘friends of the Roman people.’ Romans helped cooperative monarchs remain in power with direct payments of coins and material goods.⁵⁴

The principle remains the same: *You take the king’s shilling, you’ll do the king’s bidding.*

Ask the Principal of your local Christian school (which is in all probability, dependent on government funding), these three questions:

1. “Do you believe in God and the Bible?”
2. “Should Christians endeavour with all their heart and soul to obey the Bible and live out their Christian faith consistently?”
3. “Does the Bible legitimise the confiscation of tax-payers’ money by civil government for the education of children?”

⁵⁴ Paul Craig Roberts, “Will Iran be Attacked?” Lew Rockwell’s website, 10/2/2012.

The answer is that it doesn't. The Bible puts education firmly in the hands of parents; it is never a task of government. We have seven Education Departments in Australia that should be closed down. And we either face up to the facts about this, or judgment ultimately comes, as it came to the Jews who rejected Jesus.

This whole idea will require courageous and uncompromising Christian leadership, from people who understand that the entitlement mentality is just a poorly disguised form of economic slavery in the modern era. It will require leaders who can say to their people, "we have to change our attitude about this." It will require not just a Moses, but a whole brigade of Moses-type leaders who have seen what this has done to the community, and the Church.

Conclusion:

The church is to be the institution representing God to the world. But the welfare or entitlement mentality which grips the West today is a slavery mentality, not from God, and this attitude's in the Church.

But getting out of Egypt's slavery⁵⁵ and heading for freedom was always going to require attitudinal change on the part of God's people. It did at the Exodus, and it will today.

Are you ready to play your part in leading the way? It will mean standing up and being counted.

When Israel was a youth I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son (Hos.11:1).

⁵⁵ See Gary North, "Moses and Pharaoh," 1986.